

BELLEVUE NEIGHBORHOOD MEDIATION PROGRAM

425-452-4091

Update

Summer 2014

Thank You to our Volunteers!

We appreciate you! Please join us for our annual volunteer celebration event.

Where: Winters House
2102 Bellevue Way SE
Bellevue, WA 98009

When: Wednesday, September 10, 4-7p.m.

- Come and meet other volunteers
- Bring your families
- Invite your friends who may wish to learn more about mediation

RSVP by email: mediation_info@bellevuewa.gov
or call 425-452-4091



Does Neutrality Require Ignorance?

By Natalie Daniels

From its inception, mediation has presented itself as an alternative to the legal process. In developing our model, we have naturally compared ourselves to the existing legal system. How do we want to be the same? How do we want to be different?

One way that we have traditionally wanted to be the same is in the area of neutrality. We do not want to take sides. Moreover, we want to be neutral in the way that judges are neutral, trying our level best to avoid preconceived notions. We insulate our mediators from the intake process, so that mediators won't have one-sided contact with either party. Some mediators take this concept so seriously that they don't even want to read case notes, preferring to hear everything fresh from the parties during mediation.

Recently, however, some dispute resolution centers

have begun to question this assumption. What does impartiality require of us? Do the parties benefit from a mediator as a blank slate? Do they worry about whether the mediator is prejudiced?

Consider some pitfalls that we run into under the current mediation model. A party may give an opening statement so full of vitriol that the other side is unable to hear anything productive for the rest of the session. Both parties may discover early on that there is nothing to mediate until they research options and the potential costs involved. Mediators may encounter a power imbalance or impasse that they are not sure how to compensate for, and need time that they do not have to think about the best approach.

These are pitfalls that we can avoid by arming mediators with information about the issues within a given

mediation and the dynamics of the relationships involved. Mediators who become involved earlier in the process can begin to build trust with the parties before the first session begins. They can coach the parties on how to say things in a way that is easy to hear.

One answer is to adjust our mediation model by introducing pre-mediation conferences, at least for cases where long term relationships are involved. A pre-mediation conference is essentially an in-person pre-mediation caucus, where the mediator meets with each of the parties for an hour or so in the days leading up to a scheduled mediation session. This provides the opportunity for the mediators to hear an unfiltered account of the issues leading up to mediation, ask some tough questions about what each party hopes to achieve, and coach each party on communication techniques that may prove successful in helping them

come to a solution that everyone can live with.

Please join us for our October 1st in-service: Pre-Mediation Conferences. We will hear a short presentation from Dee Knapp. Dee is president and owner of Accord & Collaboration Dispute Resolution Services (ACDRS), a firm that provides workplace mediation, facilitation, conflict coaching and training. She has over twenty years of experience as both a litigating employment attorney and a conflict resolution expert.

Dee will be outlining her experiences with this new technique, followed by a group discussion about whether and how to incorporate this practice into the Bellevue Mediation Program model. The in-service will be from 6:30-8:00 in room 1E-118. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP by email: mediation_info@bellevuewa.gov or call 425-452-4091.

Peer Consultation

The King County Bar Association's ADR Section (which is open to both attorneys and non-attorneys) is currently leading a project to develop peer consultation groups for Alternative Dispute Resolution professionals. The vision is to create a collaborative environment in which to share experiences and obtain feedback within a structured professional framework.

One of our own volunteer mediators, Sasha Philip, is helping to spearhead this effort to bring peer consultation to mediation and other forms of dispute resolution. She has formed a group of local mediators

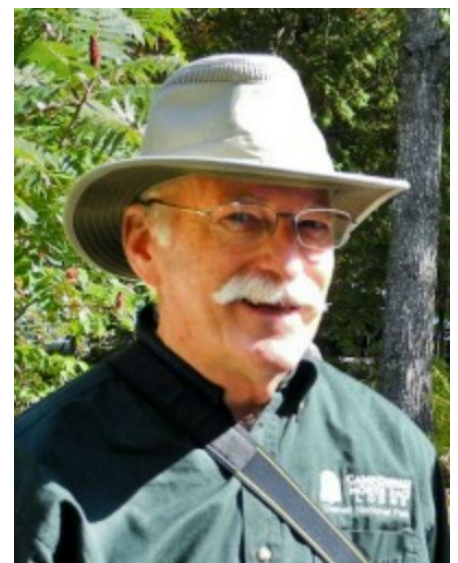
which meets regularly to discuss pitfalls and best practices. She has also helped to develop an on-line Google group to facilitate a larger discussion among ADR professionals.

If you are interested in participating in the development and/or implementation of this concept for Washington ADR practitioners, or would like to participate in a peer consultation group, please contact:

Sasha S. Philip
(425) 298-7839
Sasha@PhilipMediation.com
www.PhilipMediation.com

Ronald Scott Matthew **March 03, 1945 - April 25, 2014**

On April 25th, our dear friend and colleague, Ron Matthew, passed away. Ron was in the first group of mediators trained by the Bellevue mediation program in 1995; he also worked on staff for the program from 2000 to 2005; and he continued to volunteer after that. He was a skilled mediator, and a perceptive, thoughtful man with a delightful sense of humor and always a kind word. His passing is a sad loss for us all.



Parent—Teen Update

By Natalie Daniels

Our June Parent-Teen mediation training was a smashing success, and it is all thanks to the boundless energy and dedication of our amazing volunteers. Special thanks go to Cathy Goldman and Gwen Jones, both former coordinators of the parent teen program, who provided both trainers and trainees with their expert guidance and advice.

Even more special thanks go to Pam Orbach and Galit Arad-Trutner, our lead trainers. Pam and Galit have worked tirelessly to ensure that our mediator candidates are of the highest possible quality, and that they have been given the tools and training to become highly successful mediators. We can't wait to see our new mediators in action.

But don't take my word for it. Here are some reflections from our trainees:

- ◆ I learned a lot, I can't stop reflecting...
- ◆ Lead the people being mediated to their own solutions. We mediators are mere guides on this journey of wit, bravery, and skill.
- ◆ I valued every aspect of this week. Don't regret a moment of it. I learned so much aside from nonviolent communication, its benefit and importance, and a healthier way to approach conflict. I've learned so much from the people here. Stay Beautiful.
- ◆ I learned a lot about mediation and am sure it will help me in the future. I also gained courage.
- ◆ The fact that all the people in this room are here because they genuinely care about people. That was really refreshing.
- ◆ I liked how this will help me in everything I do from now on and how it will help me deal with my own issues and others.

BNMP Training Opportunities For Mediators and Conciliators

20-hour Conciliation and Intake Training (for new volunteers):

Wed., Oct. 22 & 29, 2014: 5p.m. to 9p.m.
in Room 1E-118

Fri., Oct. 24 & 31, 2014: 9a.m. to 4p.m.
in Room 1E-118

Neighborhood In-Service:

Pre-Mediation Conferences

Oct. 1, 2014: 6:30-8p.m. in room 1E-118

Parent-Teen In-Service Trainings:

Mock Mediation Workshop

August 20, 2014: 3-5p.m. in room 1E-112

Family Night

September 16, 2014: 6-8p.m. in room 1E-112

RSVP by email: mediation_info@bellevuewa.gov or call 425-452-4091

Welcome to the New Millennium!

BNMP now has a portable printer and laptop available for all of your agreement writing needs. Please let us know if you wish to have them available for your next mediation.

CONGRATULATIONS!

NEW CONCILIATORS:

*Carol Betts
Jude Mercer*

NEW MEDIATORS:

*Mark Combs
Peter Sugarman*

Program Staff:

Program Co-Manager:	Cheryl Cohen	-	452-5222
Program Co-Manager:	Andrew Kidde	-	452-5288
Program Assistant	Natalie Daniels	-	452-2897
Foreclosure Case Manager	Julia Devin	-	452-4118

City of Bellevue website: <http://www.bellevuewa.gov>
(Look for the Mediation Program under "Neighborhood Information")

Parent-Teen Mediation Class: June 2014



Top: Galit Arad-Trutner, Edwin Carlos Jr., Daniel Valasky, Rebecca Brown, Zachary Robin, Ewa Wroblewska, Tommy Fields, Brooks Bumstead, Tamia Pervez. **Middle:** Aiman Manna, Liam Thompson, Elaine Fouche, Zara Orbach, Keren Ferman, Cache Lubanski, Peggy Ferguson, Joyful Betcher, Dorit Levanoni, Pam Orbach. **Front:** Nathan Perry, Tibaria Alnouri, Susan Lio, Siri Betcher, Kristen Jawad.

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City of Bellevue Department of Planning and Community Development
P.O. Box 90012 Bellevue, WA 98009-9012